

Application No. 10/662,579
Amendment dated 09/22/2005
Reply to Office Action of 01/12/2006

02-ASD-184 (GT)

REMARKS

Applicant has made various changes to the claims and has added new claims 19-21 to clarify the claimed invention without changing the scope of equivalents. Entry of these changes is respectfully requested.

§ 103 rejection

Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,584,996 to Spink ("Spink") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,408,867 to Aoki et al. ("Aoki"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The Examiner admitted that Spink fails to disclose the claimed engaging cooperating surfaces to prevent relative rotation between the float and the float chamber between the two, but asserted that Aoki shows the claimed surfaces. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, nothing in Aoki suggests engaging cooperating surfaces that prevent relative rotation between the float and the float chamber, as recited in independent claims 1 and 10. Aoki only shows a guide rib 40a along the outside periphery of the float 40 that contacts an inside wall of the casing 30 (Figures 1 and 2, col. 5, lines 13-19). The guide rib 40a apparently minimizes radial (not rotational) movement of the float within the casing 30. Nothing in Aoki shows any engagement feature on either the float 40 or the casing 30; in fact, Aoki does not even provide a cross-sectional plan view of the valve, implying that the inside wall of the casing 30 is smooth without any features that can engage the guide rib 40 to prevent rotational movement.

Thus, at best, the guide rib 40a prevents the float from moving axially (i.e., side to side) within the casing 30. However, because the rib 40a merely contacts the inside wall of the casing 30 rather than engages with it, the float 40 is still free to rotate within the casing. The claimed invention, by contrast, includes cooperating surfaces that prevent relative rotation between the float and the float chamber. Because neither Spink nor Aoki suggest any structure that prevents relative rotation, the Examiner fails to establish a prima facie case of obviousness with respect to claims 1-18. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

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Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 3, 6-8 and 14-16 contain allowable subject matter. However, as noted above, none of the references disclose or suggest any structure that prevents relative rotational movement between the float and the float chamber. All of the claims, including new claims 19-21, are therefore allowable without further amendment.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 05-0275.

Respectfully submitted,



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